2: Monteil--364 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

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614 On the other hand, it closely resembles the clan of the Khasso region, on which we have published a detailed study (1).
[331]

1. See Les Khassonké in the series Revue du Monde musulman.

Chapter 6

Islam

1. Islamism and Paganism

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797 It is a commonplace to say that the Bambara are implacable enemies of Islam.

However, history shows that for centuries the Bambara have been living in contact with Islam, that they maintain close relations with native communities of Islamic converts, and that they are willing to seek the good offices of marabouts of all races and ranks.

Are they, besides, as refractory to conversion as they are said to be? The chiefs of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta and some of their near connections and intimates, as well as other notables, have been practicing Islam. The Somono, who are of Bambara extraction, are faithful believers and, what is even more significant, they are fervent propagandists for Islam.

Actually, paganism and Islamism are not mutually antagonistic dogmas in the minds of the Bambara or of the Sudanese people in general, as many Europeans believe and state it to be. In these regions, Islamization has a counterpart which prepares the way for it and explains it, and that is the "sudanization" of Islam.

During his sojourn in Kaarta Raffenel tells of an interesting incident: "I had as a landlord a blacksmith named Niany, a grotesque personage, excessively naive and with a corresponding sense of logic, but a good fellow and very amusing. One day he

771 came to me to complain that [332] my Negroes were using a
777 satala (1) to take water from his jug.

HG 783 177

1. A kind of saucepan made of copper or tin, of European origin, used by Moslem Sudanese for their ritual ablutions.

" 'What difference does that make to you?' I asked him.

" 'What difference does it make!' he answered with an angry air.

"And with that he favored me with the following astonishing line of reasoning:

" 'Now you see, I am not a (Moslem) marabout and if the marabouts take water from my jar with the satala, the water that remains in the jar will necessarily be sanctified because it came into contact with that vessel. My children and I drink this water and, since we don't know how to salaam and don't fast, and since we eat pork, God (2) will punish us for having failed

2. That is, in Niany's mind, the nyana called Ngalla (Allah) by the Bambara.

to obey his orders. For, after all, any water that has touched a satala makes a marabout (3) of the person who drinks it. That is

3. That is, an initiate of Ngalla (Allah).

what I heard from my father."

776 The net result is that, on the whole, Ngalla (Allah) is regarded as one of the nyana which we have mentioned and for which the Bambara has a superstitious respect without for that matter being a worshiper. He avoids any contact with all that concerns the nyana, not because of hostility, but for fear of incurring its wrath on account of some impurity. Just as he may call upon any convenient nyana for aid, so he asks the help of

771 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he
787 thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4)

> 4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the nyana discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted
[177] divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as laturudala or kenyelala (1) or the

> 1. Derived from kenye meaning "sand," and la meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 177 bugurigala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves

2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

791 797 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

693 reputation for integrity and impartiality than for his knowledge of the books. In other matters, however, his Moslem esoterism is the quality most highly valued.

771 It is assumed, besides, that the high priests and other persons of note should be initiated into Islamic matters, which 797 seem to be regarded simply as a branch of occultism to which such persons are especially addicted. The Kouloubali, the Dyara, and other lords of the clans of Ségou and Kaarta have practiced Islamism (1) without betraying paganism; on the

1. In the Sudanese manner, of course.

contrary, by adding to it the luster of these foreign mysteries, it can be said that they have "Sudanized" Islam as completely as possible. Neither Mamari nor Ngolo, for example, was in the least embarrassed by his Moslem practices. Both remained high priests of their tutelary idols and simply borrowed (2) the external

2. This borrowing is done with the same awkwardness as that seen when a Black puts on a suit of European clothes which happens to come into his possession. The ease with which an occasional native can adapt it is exceptional.

"manner" of Islam.

The bloodthirsty Dékoro was a Moslem of the same type. He was preparing to perform his ablutions, followed by his faithful blacksmith, at the very moment when he was assassinated by Tonmassa. And the blacksmith was actually carrying one of the satala which father Niany regarded as so compromising.

614 Naturally, the adoption of Islam was never allowed to 797 create any political deviation which might compromise the interests of the clan. That would be treason, and such was the case for Touro-koro Mari. He was put to death not because he was converted to Islam, but because he had enfeoffed himself to El Hadj Omar to such an extent that the clan's independence was threatened.

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797 It should be noted that this acceptance of things Islamic was not imposed on the Bambara by fanatical or warlike converters; in any case it [335] goes back to a time that was long before the exploits of the "people of Macina" and of "those of Fouta."

Mungo Park says that, when he passed through the area, half the Kaarta army were Moslems, and we are even better informed by Raffenel. Of course, it is in general only a kind of "Sudanized" Islam, but that is already a very important step.

Raffenel observes that the people of the Massa-si clan added a much-feared nyana of the boli to the cult of the ancestors which is common to all the Bambara. He further points out [776] that all the Bambara recognize Ngalla (Allah) and that, although they practice Islam only casually, they distinguish between believers and infidels among themselves. The Kouloubali especially consider themselves to be Moslems and affect to behave as such.

From this derives a curious spectacle giving evidence of a kind of dualism that is very suggestive. The general assembly of what one might call the ruling elements of the Massa-si clan took place at the festival of Bafram, and the Kouloubali, the chiefs of the clan, their relatives, their allies, the principal slave leaders and other dignitaries never failed to attend and to take part in the ceremonies in honor of their clan's tutelary nyana, since the meeting was especially devoted to a renewal of the oath of loyalty to this same idol. Now Raffenel reports that the Moslem festival of the sacrifice of the lamb was also held in the midst of the general rejoicing. It was, to be sure, directed by the Soninké marabouts, but most of the Bambara took part in it, imitating the motions of the officiating priests to the best of their ability and often sacrificing a lamb.

And Raffenel remarks: "Kaffirs though they are, the Bambara nevertheless show respect for the marabouts. Thus, for the festival of Bafram, the Sarakole (1) marabouts, otherwise known

1. Who call themselves Soninké but whom the Bambara call Marka.

771 as sila, also gather at Keghé (2) and address prayers to heaven
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2. Then the royal residence of the Massa-si chiefs.

for the preservation of the king's life and the glory of his reign. Custom requires the king to make rich presents to the sila on this occasion."

[336] This dualism, which appears strange and which has sometimes been interpreted as a result of Islamic influence during an earlier period of Moslem supremacy, is, on the contrary and without any doubt whatever, an essential characteristic of the native milieu. In this milieu, in theory, all religions can flourish without hindrance and even with the benevolent assent of the faithful believers of the various sects, if one may so describe the adepts in these innumerable nyana. It is certain that all religions, a priori and by their very nature, enjoy particular esteem among the Blacks.

[609] In the mind of the native, a foreigner is particularly dangerous because he is assumed to possess mysterious magic powers. Many Sudanese legends bear witness to the Black's belief that encounters with foreigners are accompanied by combats whose outcome depends entirely on magic. As a result of this state of mind, as soon as it is apparent that the stranger's cult brings no calamities in its wake, not only is the cult tolerated, but some of the natives even adopt it, at first as a kind of addition to their own cults and then gradually they become converts.

Islam has also profited from this state of mind. With the external and public manifestations of his cult the Moslem easily impresses the Bambara who, as we have seen, are constantly obsessed with the supernatural. How could they fail to be struck by this divinity called Allah, who is endlessly proclaimed all day long, and by religious observances which are displayed before the public: ablutions, prayers pronounced aloud in as strange language, rosaries, mosques which are often monumental, great and impressive ceremonies?

Further, the fact that Islam is supported by the written word of its books gives it an element of certainty that is lacking in the native cults.

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•797 Finally, there is no doubt that a learned Moslem, who is well-dressed, who does not get drunk (1) and who behaves with

1. At least in public.

dignity (1) [see footnote above] greatly impresses the pagans; his mere example creates a favorable atmosphere for Islam.

Therefore some of the natives, trying to imitate outward appearances, find themselves drawn toward Islam, whose rites they practice without even having any desire to be converted. The mere fact of dressing in white, wearing a white cap, going about [337] in sandals, conspicuously telling one's beads, salaaming while muttering incomprehensible words or continually repeating "Allah Akoubar," and participating in important ceremonies, suffices to give an individual an elegant air without in the least interfering with pagan traditions.

The Islamism noted by Mungo Park in the Bambara army and among the Kouloubali and other dignitaries, is an example of this simple formalism. On the other hand, the Bambara, without exception, [789] are eternally on the lookout for magic formulas: talismans, amulets, remedies and procedures of all kinds. And Islam provides a whole arsenal of magic which is very popular with the Blacks.

In addition to all these attractions, Islam seems to the Bambara to have institutions which are not basically opposed to their own. It tolerates polygamy, divorce, repudiation and slavery. As practiced over a long period by the natives, who have skilfully Sudanized it, it is adapted without difficulty to all sorts of situations. The blacksmith, that master of accultism, scarcely has to change at all when he becomes a marabout; he merely acquires some new manners which enable him to preside at birth, circumcision, marriage, death or other social or family ceremonies in the name of Islam. However, this is an Islam so close to paganism that it differs only in name. Allah, under the name of Ngalla, has taken his place in the Bambara pantheon alongside the other nyana, and the only distinction is that he has his own "manner."

771 Incidentally, this "manner" possesses, under some cir-
797 cumstances, advantages which encourage adhesion to Islam. Slaves belonging to true Moslem believers do well to give clear
[567] evidence of their new faith if they wish to obtain their freedom. Ngolo made use of this means according to the chronicle of Ségou.

Women and, in general, the "weak people" often claim conversion -- only rarely deep or sincere -- in order to escape from the arbitrary and rigorous nature of the custom governing them.

2. The agents of Islam

797 As regards the people with whom we are here concerned, it can be said that the center, which directly or indirectly has [338] had the greatest influence in spreading Islam, is the city of Dia (1).

1. A city on the left bank of the Niger, in the present-day province of Macina.

Dia is certainly the oldest metropolis of Islam in western Sudan, but this was an accommodating kind of Islam, which compromised easily with native customs and gave a large role to magic.

"The characteristic of the marabouts of Dia is their scarcely disguised tendency to rely on Islamic magic. The city has always been considered the great center for the production of amulets in the valley of the Middle Niger" (Marty, Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan [Studies on Islam and the tribes of the Sudan] Vol. 4).

These marabouts belong to very diverse races, but those of the Marka are dominant and with them should be considered their confreres, the Bozo, on whose training the Marka have always exerted a preponderant influence. The Somono marabouts usually come from one or the other of these two races.

All of them are linked in one way or another with high priests from Moorish or Peul Islam and, through them or their emissaries, are allied with one or another of the brotherhoods.

797 However, the doctrinal aspect is relatively much less important than the considerable consequences brought about by the Sudanization accomplished over a long period and in different ways by these agents who have been active in and intimately mingled with local life.

Foreigners, such as Berbers and Arabs, who have appeared to enjoy a certain degree of predominance during their lifetime, have been absorbed in the end by the native milieu: their children belong completely to it and, as a result, lose entirely their independence.

Such are the major lines of influence which should not be lost from sight, for they dominate the work of peaceful Islamization which gives Islam such a hold that like its original propagandists, it has, in fact, gradually taken on an entirely native physiognomy.

This peaceful propagation and diffusion have been at work at all times and it is because of their action that there spreads an Islamic atmosphere along both banks of the Middle Niger.

The strong measures taken by the "people of Macina" and also [339] by the "people of Fouta" were far from being efficacious and sometimes they even had to be compromised. It must be conceded, however, that the "people of Macina" did achieve certain widespread and lasting results, thanks to the methodical and prolonged labors (1) of Sheik Ahmadou Bari which

1. For these labors see Monographie de Djénné [Monograph on Djenné].

resulted in conversions long since prepared for by the surrounding atmosphere.

On the other hand, the sectarian fanaticism of the "people of Fouta" forced the fearful to embrace the Moslem faith temporarily and without any spirit of conversion, but only to escape imminent peril. Once the danger had passed, everyone resumed his independence.

1173 797 The Somono families, such as the Kané, the Dyiré and the Tyéro, which historical tradition associates with the earliest

*773 events of the clan of Ségou, are still in existence in the area
•797 and their members are regarded as enlightened and zealous Moslems. The chronicle tells us that the chiefs of these families were well-known marabouts by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Soma Kouloubali accepted the hospitality of Alfa Sérou Kané (2). Almami Ousman Dyiré, who resided at

2. One of his descendants, Mamadou Kané, served as Ngolo's intermediary when the latter was trying to get back into Mamari's good graces. Later, one of the three arbiters called upon to make peace between Ngolo's sons was the Somono marabout, Birama Kané, who lived at Sien.

Ségou-koro, went to live at Togou in order to evade the inconvenience of being too close to Mamari Kouloubali. The Tyéro family, said to have come from the Bobo country in Mamari's time, owed their important position to one of their leaders, Bari Tyéro, who was chief of the Somono.

These three families, Kané, Dyiré and Tyéro, which are regarded as essentially Somono, undoubtedly descend from mingled Soninké and Bozo stocks, for a change of nationality through preference is common. The Dyiré of Ségou, a corruption of whose name gave the name to the N-Guiré of Koulikoro, were originally related to the Bozo, Dyité or Guité of Kabara, who are themselves of Soninké origin, as are the Guissé of Gadiaga.

The Kané are even closer to this Soninké origin. The Tyéro are connected with a Bozo root at Pondori (in the Djenné region).

These champions of Islam on the right bank of the Niger are seconded, on the left bank, by [340] Karamoko Ousman Dyari at Nyamina; the Khomma and the Diakhaté at Sansanding; and the sherifs, also at Sansanding, led by Sherif Ismaïl.

Along the river, the Bozo and the Somono are necessarily predominant, but their local importance should not obscure the fact that both derive from the Soninké who, along the whole

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length of the Niger valley from Bammako to Mopti, represent the oldest center of Moslem proselytism.

In the same period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is the Soninké who are Islamizing the whole country where the Massa-si clan is going to be the dominant force. This clan will suffer vicissitudes which will cause it to be constantly on the move, but it will never actually leave the area brought under Islam by the Soninké. Indeed, little by little, some elements of the clan will be led to become Moslems, in the native manner of course, that is, by Sudanizing whatever aspects of Islam they feel will give a cachet of superiority to their oligarchy.

The empire of Sheik Ahmadou Bari forced the Bambara under its control to adopt Moslem ways, and for many the conversion was a real one. For our purposes here, we cite the Bambara collectivities which constitute the major portion of the population in the cantons of Dérari and Femay (in the circle of Djenné). The Bozo were likewise greatly affected by the action of Sheik Ahmadou Bari, and the Somono perhaps even more so.

In the case of the "people of Fouta," they conquered the people of Ségou and Kaarta but their rule was unfortunate for Islam.

El Hadj Omar sent from Farabana a messenger to the Massa-si to enjoin them to become Moslems. As we have just seen, the Massa-si had already practiced Islam in the Sudanese fashion. Thus, without abandoning any of their native customs, they had assumed those outward aspects of the Moslem religion which they considered dignified.

The ultimatum issued by El Hadj Omar struck them as a challenge and they replied by putting the messenger to death.

Omar put his army on the march against the Bambara. He defeated them at Koulou, crossed the Senegal at Soutoukoulé, [341] entered Kouniakari, crossed the Séro, soon reached Yélimané and, without stopping, took Tango and Dioka. Finally at Simbi, he received the surrender of Mamadi Kandia, chief of the Kouloubali; Karouga, chief of the Diawara; Nouhoun and Sambonné, chiefs of the Peul of Bakounou; and Mahoundé, chief of the Kagoro.

*173 797 Omar then proceeded to Nioro, where he confiscated the treasure of the Massa-si, put to death the children of Mamadi Kandia and imposed Islam on the people of Nioro. In particular, he ordered polygamous individuals to keep only four of their wives and to turn over the rest to his talibés.

These victories and the excesses that accompanied them made inevitable the revolt of the native populations. Omar was then besieged at Nioro, while the rest of his army was blocked in the Kolomina area. He managed to raise the siege and get away to aid his people at Kolomina. In spite of a serious defeat at Kandiari, he succeeded in freeing Kolomina.

Thence he returned to Nioro and, after putting Mamadi Kandia to death, succeeded in quelling the Bambara revolt. Then Kaarta was conquered and Omar settled at Nioro, which he fortified.

The Diawara, aroused and led by Karouga, revolted. Omar defeated them at Diabigué, was halted at Bambéro, but finally put down this rebellion of the Kingui region.

Then he entered into negotiations with Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, hoping to arrange an alliance to make a joint attack on Ségou. Ahmadou refused and marched against Omar, only to be defeated at Kassakaré.

Omar then made a deal with Touro-koro Mari, the chief of Ségou, but the latter, accused of betraying his clan, was put to death by Kégné-Mari and replaced by Ali (1856).

175 797 It was at this point that Omar came up against the French at Médina. For a period of three years his activity was limited to the west by the affairs of Médina, Koundian and Guémou (1856-1859).

In 1859, revolt again threatened in Kaarta. Omar left Nioro, which he turned over to his devoted follower, Moustapha. Through Bagoïna, he passed around the Diangounté region to fall on the Bambara of Kaarta and Bélédougou at Marikoya. The capture of Marikoya was echoed far and wide. This agglomeration was a kind of capital of [342] paganism, and it is said that Omar, rushing about the burning village, kept running into magic objects which had been scattered about for the purpose of killing him. He touched each of these objects with the tip of

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797 his iron-shod staff and pronounced a formula of exorcism; at once the object threw itself in the flames.

After his defeat, Karouga, chief of the Diawara, fled to Ségou. He persuaded Ali to give him an army and marched against Omar.

The latter defeated him in the northern part of Bélédougou.

The Bambara of the Bélédougou and Fadougou areas were likewise beaten, as was a new army from Ségou which had come to help them.

Since there was nothing left with which to feed his people at Marikoya, Omar decided to march on Ségou. An episode, characteristic of these times of banditry, marked his departure. He decided to abandon the women whom his faithful followers had taken from the conquered because they were useless mouths to feed, so he turned the poor creatures over to the fetishists.

Omar entered Myamina in April, 1860. When he had exhausted the provisions in that region he marched on Oïtala, the village of Ali's son Tata and captured it. Sansanding was delivered to him by the Khomma people because of their hatred for the Cissé people.

Ahmadou, Sultan of Macina, wrote Omar to ask him to leave the country and then sent an army against him. This force, commanded by Ahmadon's uncle, Ba Lobba, reached Kani, below Sansanding on the Niger, and then Ali, chief of Ségou, joined Ba Lobba at Tio.

Omar crossed the Niger in January, 1861, defeated the allies and entered Ségou on March 10, 1861.

The two Bambara clans of Ségou and Kaarta were now finally defeated.

Within a few months of his arrival at Ségou, Omar received the submission of the former Bambara officials: army chiefs and territorial chiefs. Among other conditions, he imposed on them the following orders: they were to shave their heads; to stop drinking fermented beverages; to eat no more unclean meats; to make the ritual prayers; and for each of them, to have no more than four legitimate wives. He demanded hostages from the sons or brothers of chiefs or other notables, and incorporated them into his tofa.

175 When Omar left Ségou in April, 1862, [343] to march
797 against Handallahi, he left his son Ahmadou in command, backed by a guard of 1,500 tabilés and the support of the Bambara chiefs who had sworn loyalty to him.

3. The Results

175 It is usual to consider Omar's warlike enterprises solely
614 from the point of view of Islam and to attribute their purpose
797 and result to Peul proselytism. Such an explanation is dubious at best and in any case is very ambiguous. This question, however, involves a detailed study which is beyond the scope of this work, so we shall limit ourselves here to the subject at hand.

Omar replaced the clans of Kaarta and Ségou with the clan of the "people of Fouta," claiming that his conquests were due to a desire to convert the Bambara to Islam. In reality, this Moslem label did not change the native customs in the least; the clan of the people of Fouta proved to be conditioned and dominated by the same principles as the clans of Kaarta and Ségou.

The composition of this clan is a proof of this similarity. Omar and his community are at the head of an association made up of the tabilés, the people of Fouta, the usual sofa and ton'-dyon', and the tuburu, who are people converted to Islam by force. All these people, linked by material interests, are brought together by a common faith. Leaders of the slaves hold important military or political posts. What is there in all this that is not already to be found in what we have discussed before? The means used to gain power are identical, and the only thing that differs is the label. It is claimed that Islam instead of paganism constitutes the motivating force.

In general, the evolution of this clan differs not at all from that of the clans already discussed; it can be described in the same terms.

175 A man of remarkable intelligence and powers of leader-
797 ship, Omar would probably have given his achievements the cohesion and stability needed to make them endure if he had lived long enough. However, he died too soon before he had

175 797 reached a point of limiting, at least temporarily, the extent of his conquests.

He left his son Ahmadou to face the worst possible difficulties. Ahmadou had neither Omar's authority nor his prestige to impose them on the chiefs of Fouta whom his [344] father had drawn into his orbit. Therefore they formed a party of malcontents who intrigued against him at the behest and for the profit of his various adversaries or enemies.

He was forced to deal with serious treason fomented against him within his own family by his brothers. He managed to get rid of some of the latter by criminal means. He was one of those fa who, at once weak and cruel, are incapable either of making their authority acceptable or of imposing it in case of need. As a result, Ahmadou was never supported by the confident or devoted affection of his own people.

At the mercy of the implacable and changeable machinations of a small group of his intimates, he was a puppet in the hands of these intriguers.

The occasionally successful expeditions which he led against his enemies and which, at the same time, served to satisfy his subjects' need for booty, had no important political significance. This was because they were carried out without any careful planning which would have made it possible to profit from them by taking local conditions into account.

The net result was that this long reign represented simply a long period of unrest among the members of the clan, accompanied by a brutal exploitation of the conquered people.

What could Islam gain from such a regime? If we set aside, as outside the sphere of our subject, the matter of doctrinal influence which was the work of Omar, it can be stated that the domination of the fouta-n-ke was an unfortunate development for the spread of Islam among the Bambara people with whom we are here concerned. No adequate organization, comparable to that of Sheik Ahmadou Bari at Macina, was formed to discipline the pagans and to interest them, especially to link them to the destinies of the clan of the Fouta people. The fanaticism of the talibé, the ferocious brutality of the sofa

175 and the political incoherence of the fama all combined to keep
797 the Bambara in a state of perpetual rebellion, either open or latent. Islam itself was not responsible for this state of affairs; rather, it was the incompetence and tyranny of its agents and the political regime in general which were at the root of the implacable hostility of the Bambara.

797 Islam prospers during peaceful eras. In itself it is not in the least antipathetic to pagans; on the contrary, the Bambara live perfectly harmoniously with the faithful, who, for their part, [345] successfully accommodate their brand of Islam to local native customs. That is why the Somono, the Bozo and the Marka are the best-qualified and most successful propagandists for Islam in the Bambara country. It was through their effort that, little by little, Moslem influence slowly penetrated the native atmosphere as if through a process of absorption.

True conversion occurs most often in an unconscious manner as a result of the Sudanization of Islam, whose endless ramifications form a kind of network of capillaries through which the Moslem sap in turn finds its way and, in the process, transforms the native temperament, often without the latter's awareness. The result of this process is a religion which is Islam only in name but which, being perfectly adapted to the purpose, has exercised, still exercises and will for a long time continue to exercise a vital role in the development of native society.

175 The occasion seemed favorable. After the death of the great N'Golo-Diara, two of his sons disputed the power. Dessé had the bad luck to support the loser. The victor, Mansong (1792-1808), came at once to punish the Kaarta inhabitants and destroyed Guémou, but he could not establish himself in the region.

After this, the evolution of the two kingdoms is roughly parallel. When the people of Ségou are occupied in the east against the people of Macina, the people of Kaarta seize the occasion to raid in the west against the Diawara and the Kassonké. When things go poorly in Macina, the people of Ségou revenge themselves by forays into the territory of the Massassi of Kaarta, who, less powerful, then have to relinguish their expansionist plans. Moreover, somber hours approach for the Bambara. In the east Ahmadou Bari founded a powerful Peul kingdom (1810) in the Macina, and his grandson Hamadou-Hamadou exerts more and more pressure on the kingdom of Ségou. To the west the great Massassi king, Bodian Moriba (1815-32), by repeated blows has exhausted the forces of the Diawara and the Kassonké. This done, he rules over Nioro, but at the same time suppresses those who could have helped him resist the Moslem push of the Toucouleur.

F. The Toucouleur Invasion and the End of the Bambara Kingdoms

175 In 1854 El Hadj Omar, leading his "Talibés" animated by a
• 197 fierce proselytizing spirit, occupied Nioro and Kaarta and attempted to impose Islam on the Bambara population. The Bambara resisted, supported by their racial brothers of Ségou who had forgotten, too late, the old quarrels. El Hadj Omar, vanquished by the French before Medina, [49] abandoned his dream of a push to the west and sought compensation by turning toward Ségou.

175 The Bambara then put aside their family resentments and joined the Peul of Macina, who were equally menaced by the Toucouleur expansion. But they were up against too strong a foe. Tata, son of the king Ali Diara, resisted for five days against El Hadj Omar1s howitzers at Oïtala on the Niger (1861), then succumbed. Hamadou-Hamadou, who had come to his aid, was beaten at Sansanding. Ségou opened its doors; Ali Diara was put in irons. His brother, Kégué-Mari, continued the fight against Ahmadou, son

D. The New Religions: Islam and Christianity

797 177 Alongside this ancestral religion, the Bambara have been exposed to imported religions: Islam and Christianity. The Bambara long resisted the advance of Islam from the Sahara and the cruel Toucouleur domination lasted too briefly to transform a solidly organized religion. But the social evolution provoked by the French conquest has realized what El-Hadj-Omar's conquest could not. The breakdown of the traditional social structures was accompanied by a loosening of religious authority, counterbalanced by the political and administrative authority of the French. Moreover, European educational practices tend to replace the initiation each child received and to turn the children away from the traditional notions. [87] Now, this ignorance and this loss of religious authority are particularly favorable to the diffusion of Islam whose powerful propagandizing is well-known. This diffusion seems to be helped besides by the development of the means of communication, which, on the one hand, aid in separating the young people from the traditional familial authority, and, on the other hand, promote the travel of Dioula and Syrian merchants. All these Mussulmans live in close contact with the population and spread their beliefs, as well as their merchandise, throughout the country. If Islam is constantly on the increase, its practice remains nevertheless superficial and very far from orthodox. Very often it affects only the external forms of the ritual, while the old beliefs and even the traditional sacrifices remain. In addition, the country is still more divided by a certain number of sects, each of which has a Marabout at its head. But the Istiklal constantly attempts, by means of Koran schools directed by Egyptian Mussulmans, to unify this movement which is political as well as religious.

797 The Christian movement is much less important. In the Sudan it is essentially Catholic; missions are created in the bush and in certain centers, but they are still very few and far between. However, the creation of a Black clergy permits easier contacts with the population. The principal centers of the Catholic cult in the Sudan are at Bamako, the residence of the apostolic vicar, at Kati, Ouolosebougou (Bamako circle), Béléko (Diaila subdivision), Gualala (Yanfolila circle), Kayes, an apostolic prefecture with two churches, at Kakoulou (Kayes circle), Kita (White fathers and sisters of Our Lady of Africa), Karangasso

797 (Koutiala circle), Mandjakuy (San circle), Ségou, Kolongotomo (Macina subdivision), and at Sikasso (apostolic prefecture). In Guinea there is a Catholic center at Siguiri. In Upper Volta there are centers at Niangoloko (Banfora circle), Ouahigouya, and Bam: Black sisters (Ouahigouya circle). Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is a center at Gorhogo.

Protestant missions are even less numerous; they are generally American. The efforts they have exerted are far from having been crowned with success. We will mention, however, the cultural centers at Bamako with two protestant schools, the center at Sirakoro (Yanfolila circle), the ones at Baramba and Somasso (Koutiala circle), comprising two missions, the center at N'Torosso (San circle), and that of Sikasso. In Upper Volta, centers are at Siniena (Banfora circle) and at Ouahigouya. Finally, in the Ivory Coast there is one at Torogo (Korhogo circle).

II. Techniques

182 It is impossible to give a complete picture of all Bambara techniques; we are far from knowing them all. Investigations are being carried out on the spot, and already they indicate that no object, in its form or its material, no gesture of the customary actions, is due to the imagination of the maker. On the contrary, the material, [88] as well as the movements, is integrated in a system of representations that the Bambara can explain. The principal techniques among these have been analyzed and explained, but many have been described in a very superficial manner.

A. Body Techniques

The Bambara think that fecundation is the work of Faro. This 776 creative function is represented materially by the eating of a tomato 833 by each spouse before sexual relations, which must be repeated twice. 842 It is by means of this consecrated tomato that Faro transmits the life he conserves in water. The role of the father is to give the new-born his articulations which make him fit for work. He transforms the celestial seed into terrestial seed.

176 If on this earth the smallest of rulers, the least of potentates, is surrounded by servants and slaves, could the Creator be without them? If those who form the court of a king are superior to the gouatigi, or "family heads," to the dougoutigi, or "village heads," and to the kafotigi, or "heads of cantons," would those who form the celestial court be inferior to men, to genii, or to demons? The conclusion is perfectly natural; they would be superior to the latter, and to what will he /the Bambara/ compare them? Since they always in every way use themselves as a basis for comparison, they have only to think of themselves in order to remain logical in their conception of the world and to attribute to these beings the nature of their souls, their dousou, which they also call son. Is this not what they have done? When the Bambara define their idea of the soul and want to be understood, have they any other word than this very one, méléké, which they use to designate the angels? It is clear that they do not owe their concept [177] of heaven and the angels to the Moslems; they have appropriated from a foreign language a word which corresponded to a concept they already had, and that is all.

176 177 192 196 However, I am told that they have only one word to designate the Divinity, the Only God, and that word is the Islamic term itself, Alla. They have no other, and the first missionaries, doubtless through ignorance of the pagans' hatred of the Moslems, adopted it, thus creating a hindrance to their ministry (1). Yes, Alla is the term

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1. By translating as Alla both God and our concept of the Divinity, the first missionaries failed to establish the profound division which should exist between Catholicism and Islamism. The pagans regard the Catholic and the Moslem, as cousins, if not as brothers, and the word Alla is not irrelevant to this view. Because the Catholics believe in the Old Testament, they seem in the eyes of the Negro to border on Islamism, and the departure from it into Christianity

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seems to them like membership in a sect derived directly from Islamism. The Mosiems help with all their might to further belief in this nonsense. Therefore the missionaries should delete from their catechisms the word Alla for "God," as well as the ridiculous word mori for "priest," the word néma for "grace," etc., etc. -- in a word, all that is not Bambara.

176 177 192 196 they use in everyday language when they speak of God, but in the beginning did they not have another, and do they not still have one at present? /76/

I have always been surprised at the Negro's readiness to call a divine blessing by the name of its Author, and when in the winter he receives the blessing of blessings, the rain that makes plants sprout and the harvest grow, this is the way he expresses himself: "Alla bi fign, Alla bi na, Alla bi kouloukoulou, Alla bi yégé yégé, Alla do, etc., God darkens, God comes, God rumbles, God flashes, it is God," etc. These are purely metaphoric expressions, which mean: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning, it is the rain."

I have found these metaphors on their lips also with exactly the same meaning but this time in Bambara words: "Sa bi fign, sa bi na, sa bi kouloukoulou, sa bi yégé yégé, sa do," the meaning is likewise: "The clouds gather; it will rain; the thunder rumbles; there are flashes of lightning; it is the rain." The word sa is strictly Bambara and so cannot reasonably be regarded as more recent than the Arab word; the Negroes therefore had it before they knew the word Alla. The word did not mean "cloud," "thunder," "lightning," or "rain," and there is every reason to believe that there was a time when it awakened in their minds a concept identical with that which the word Alla awakens in them at present, and that this word Alla from a foreign language is only used to express a concept long held by them.

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

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4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the